

## DISPUTES RESOLUTION AMONGST RESIDENTS OF TENEMENT PROPERTIES IN LAGOS, NIGERIA

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**Abstract :** Low income earners in Lagos metropolis have peculiar taste for a type of residential property, popularly referred to as face-me-I-face-you. The type of property usually consists of many units rooms flanking a central passage. Tenants with different orientation and background cohabit, and conflicts frequently occur amongst them. This paper examines the causes of conflicts that are common amongst tenants of tenement type of residential accommodation in Lagos metropolis. In so doing, questionnaires coupled with direct observation and interviews were administered on total of five hundred respondents randomly selected from five zones in the study area. The study found a number of factors causing the conflicts and recommends creative problem-solving strategies, amongst others, for managing such conflicts amongst occupiers of tenement houses in the study area.

### Introduction

Human beings are naturally gregarious and no human being is an island on his own. There is therefore a need for them to interact, cohabit, and do things in common. The Lagos metropolis has witnessed continuous growth in demand for housing units by low-income earners for all types of properties, especially during the era of economic boom in the 1980s (Oni, 2008).

The low-income earners have peculiar taste for tenement properties because of its low rent, though many of such properties lack basic infrastructure. The tenement type of residential properties usually consists of unit rooms flanking both sides of a central passage that connects the rooms to shared unit kitchens and toilets at the rear. Sometimes the kitchen is attached to the structure while the conveniences (toilet and bathrooms) are in most cases detached from the main building. This design of type of property was said to have been imported from Brazil at the end of slave trade era. The property is also characterized by overcrowding; with several individual families occupying unit rooms or room-and-parlours; and individual occupiers having differing tastes, aspirations and socio-cultural backgrounds.

As a result of differing socio-cultural backgrounds, on many occasions the occupiers of the low-income houses listen to separate and conflicting songs blaring from their musical sets, and because of the population of occupiers, the facilities are inadequate with the use of available bathrooms, kitchens and toilets carried out on rotational basis. The occupiers often resort to cooking at the central passage. Disagreement, misunderstanding, quarrelling and open confrontations occasionally bloody do occur.

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**Keywords :** conflict, conflict resolution, low-income earners, low-income housing, tenant, tenement.

Lagos metropolis, the largest city in Nigeria has been chosen as the study area. It has a population of 15.5m people thus becoming the second largest city in Africa after Cairo. Located at 6°34'60"N, 3°19'59"E along the West African coast, it is the former Federal capital city of Nigeria until 12th December, 1991 when Abuja replaced it. The city remains the commercial centre of Nigeria to date. According to recent UN study (1999), the city of Lagos is expected to hit the 24.5 million-population mark and thus be among the ten most populous cities in the world by the year 2015. The Lagos metropolitan area spreads over much of Lagos State, which itself covers an area of approximately 3,345 square kilometers (Oni, 2008).

Conflicts are a natural part of human interaction and it is common amongst occupiers of land and buildings have been the concern of many individuals and body corporate. They occur amongst the occupiers of tenement houses in the Lagos metropolis, and the need to examine the issue of conflicts amongst the low income housing residents with the aim of finding solution has made the study very significant. Towards this end, three questions are posed: What are the most common conflicts amongst the occupiers of low-income residential properties, popularly called face-me-1-face you in the study area? How are such conflicts resolved whenever they arise? What are the strategies for peaceful resolution of disputes amongst the study group? What are the best ways to resolve such conflicts?

The choice of the study area is based on many factors. Lagos State is a socially heterogeneous city with tribes and nationals from within and outside Nigeria aggregating in Lagos metropolis. The city represents the melting-pot of various races, and of economic activities with high net-worth manufacturing, commercial entities, high grade residential precincts, highly productive industrial concerns that have congregated to take advantage of the nearness to sea and international airports, and rail systems, and also served with networks of trunk roads. This makes demand for residential properties increase on daily basis as migration of all classes of people into the State increases. In addition, Lagos has been selected because it is the economic, social, commercial, industrial and political nerve-centre of Nigeria and, by extension, the nerve-centre of West Africa sub-region. The degree of urbanization exemplified by the study area justifies that deduction and recommendations made in respect of thereof will be applicable to other states in Nigeria, and Africa countries (Oni, 2008).

### **Survey of Literature**

Disputes have been defined as expressed differences between two or more individuals and interdependent groups over real or perceived incompatible goals or resources. How individuals choose to engage in or manage conflict depends on their personal view of conflict and on the source of conflict (Rasmussen and Brunson, 1996). It is an inherent ingredient in human society that has sprang from observations of raw animal nature in which rules or order were determined by length of tooth and strength of claws and as long as physical conflict was considered to be inherent in man's makeup, it was assumed that it would usually be employed in his dealings with others (Steele, 1976).

It refers to disagreements, public complaints, and protests involving arguments, physical assault, violence and lawsuits. Feelings of unfairness and injustice, suspicion, anger, emotion, and mistrust lead to conflict (Martinelli and Almeida, 1998). Conflict occurs because of difference in values, beliefs and interests, ambiguity over responsibility and authority, poor communication, and unwillingness to respond to social, political, cultural, technological, economic and social changes (Buckles, 1999). In a conflict situation each party attempts to destroy, injure, thwart, influence or control the behavior of another party (Sidaway, 1996).

Amy (1987) identified three general sources of conflict: misunderstanding, interests, and values; while Burton (1990) was of the opinion that only those differences associated with values are conflicts and those involving information or interests classified as disputes. Misunderstanding-based conflicts surface when there is no adequate access to available information or there are differing interpretations of such information (Rasmussen and Brunson, 1996).

In the process of conflict, the established patterns of behavior among the parties involved are disrupted. Conflict processes, however, are often subject to their own rules and limits. Conflicts may involve two people only or it could be multi-party. Multi-party conflicts involve two men, their wives and, in many cases, their children and individual relations. Conflict may be defined as a condition involving at least two parties, who have a mutual problem of position or resources scarcity, in which there is a behavior (or threat) designed through the exercise of power to control or gain at the other's expense.

Conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur. An activity that is incompatible with another is one that prevents, blocks, or interferes with the occurrence or effectiveness of the second activity. A conflict can be as small as a disagreement or as large as a war. It can originate in one person, between two or more people, or between two or more groups (Deutsch, 1973). Conflicts can be classified as controversy, conceptual conflict, conflict of interest, or developmental conflict. Controversy - a controversy occurs when one person's ideas, information, conclusions, theories, and opinions are incompatible with those of another and the two seek to reach an agreement. In conceptual conflict, incompatible ideas exist simultaneously in his or her mind or when information being received does not seem to fit with what one already knows. An individual experiences conceptual conflict when engaged in controversy as ideas and arguments are presented that are incongruent with one's original position. Conflict of Interests also known as interpersonal conflict occurs when the actions of one person attempting to maximize his or her goals prevent, block, or interfere with another person attempting to maximize personal goals. Developmental conflict occurs when there are incompatible activities between adult and child based on the opposing forces of stability and change within the child cycles in and out of peak intensity as the child develops cognitively and socially (Johnson and Johnson, 1995).

Another form of conflict is known as intractable and are characterized as being protracted, irreconcilable, violent, of a zero-sum nature, total, and central, with the parties involved having an interest in their continuation. They are demanding, stressful, painful, exhausting, and costly both in human and material terms (Azar, 1985; Goertz and Diehl, 1993; Kriesberg, 1998). In all cases, conflicts are a natural part of human interaction and people in conflicts, whether at the individual or group level, perceive that their goals or interests are contradicted by the goals or interests of the other party; and according to Bar-Tal (2000), outbreak of conflicts is dependent on the appearance of particular perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and motivations, all of which must change for conflict resolution to occur.

These characteristics require that society members develop conditions that enable them cope successfully with the conflict situation through quick resolution. Resolution involves the breaking into constituent parts and developing a consonant solution to the problem at hand. This is with a view to eliminating perceived incompatibility between the parties, and it usually ends with an agreement. It is a form of conflict resolution on which more efforts are now being expended by social scientists (Steele, 1976; Keogh and Haltzel, 1993; Krepon and Sevak, 1996; Lederach, 1997; Rothstein, 1999; Tavuchis, 1991; Burton, 1990; Deutsch, 1973; Fisher, 1990; Kriesberg, 1992; Kriesberg, 1998).

There are many ways to resolving conflicts, these include surrendering, running away, overpowering the opponent with violence, filing a lawsuit, et cetera. In general, common forms of conflict resolutions are negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and hybrid of mediation-arbitration. Others are early neutral evaluation, community conferencing, negotiated rulemaking, and peer mediation. Mediation is a voluntary and confidential process in which a neutral third-party facilitator helps people discuss difficult issues and negotiate an agreement. Basic steps in the process include gathering information, framing the issues, developing options, negotiating, and formalizing agreements. Parties in mediation create their solutions and the mediator does not have any decision-making power over the outcome.

The Association for Conflict Resolution (2003) defined arbitration, mediation-arbitration, community conferencing, negotiated rulemaking, and peer mediation in relation to conflict resolution. Arbitration is a process in which a third-party that is neutral issues a decision to settle a case between two or more people, after reviewing evidence and listening to arguments from parties. It is often used in commercial, labor, or management disputes. Mediation-Arbitration is a hybrid that combines arbitration and mediation processes, with the disputing parties adopting mediation first, but give the neutral third party the authority to make a decision if mediation is fails. Early neutral evaluation involves using a court-appointed attorney to review a case before it goes to trial. The attorney reviews the merits of the case and encourages the parties to attempt resolution. If there is no resolution, the attorney informs the disputants about how to proceed with litigation and gives an opinion on the likely outcome if the case goes to trial (Association for Conflict Resolution, 2003).

A number of techniques have been developed in resolving conflict in a society, these include: inaction, negotiation, facilitation, mediation, arbitration, court action, non-violence, violence, conflicts escalate, with variety of processes used to deal with them. Psychological perspective, the cognitive approach to the analysis of conflict has recently emerged and attained prominence. The cognitive approach emphasizes the representation of a conflict in the participants' awareness. This does not necessarily imply that such representations are distorted or unreal. The approach recognizes that conflicts are often based on political, economical, military, or societal events; however, in order for conflicts to be operative, they must be first identified as such in minds of the group members (Rasmussen and Brunson (1996; Axelrod, 1976; Eldridge, 1979; Falkowski, 1979).

Reconciliation is not a necessary process in every intergroup conflict. It only applies to those intergroup conflicts that last for a long time (at least two decades) and involves extensive violence. When such a conflict endures for so many years, there is considerable accumulation of animosity, hatred, and prejudice; collective memories are imprinted by events related to the conflict; various cultural products reflect the antagonistic sentiment; beliefs related to the conflict become societal beliefs and are incorporated in to the ethos; and at least one generation is socialized in the conflict climate, not knowing another reality.

Basically, conflict may be resolved when one party comes to believe that its erstwhile antagonist has abandoned its incompatible goal and effective communication is adopted.

Inter-personal communication is the favorite elixir prescribed to for ailing human relationships improve their relationships is to communicate fully and openly with one another (Bosco, 1972). According to Roloff (1976), Sillars (1980) and Fitzpatrick, et al (1982), there are a number of ways to deal communicatively with conflicts. This can be broadly classified as pro-social or anti-social in nature, and when faced with an interpersonal conflict, an individual can choose to avoid. Furthermore, there are five modes of conflict resolution outcomes: withdrawing, denying, refusing, ignoring and postponing. Postponing a conflict until a later time

may be a joint decision which is probably a pro-social avoidance strategy. Denying that conflict exists and ignoring its existence may be joint or individual decisions made in an interaction. Withdrawing from the physical scene of an interaction clearly serves a competitive function in the interaction as it prematurely terminates the discussion between couples and restricts the choices of the temporarily abandoned partner.

### Material and Methods

The basis of zoning adopted in enforcing the Lagos State Rent Edict of 1997 was used in demarcating the study area into zones. The edict zoned Lagos State into eleven zones, namely A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, K, M, and N (Oni, 2008). However, the Lagos metropolis which is the study area only consists of five zones, namely, A, B, C, M, and N as detailed in Table 1.

*Table-1 : Division of Lagos Metropolis into Zones*

Zone	Communities
A	Lagos Island including Olowogbowo, Isale Eko, Epetedo, Sangross, Obalende, Onikan, Araromi Faji Area, Oke-Suna, Anikantamo, Lafiaji, Oke-Popo area, Agarawu area, Oko-Awo, Tinubu, Brazillian Quarters, Obadina, Ita-Eleiyi area, Apogbon, Idumota, Ereko, Oto, Ido, Surulere, Ebute Meta West, Apapa,
B	Lawanson, Tejuoso, Ojuelegba, Mabo area, Yaba, Sabo, Onike, [waya, Akoka, Igbobi, Jibowu, Fadeyi, Onipanu, Palm grove, old Ilupeju, Obanikoro, Aguda, Surulere, Apakun, Papa Ajao, Oyadiran Estate, Festac (High Density), Ikate, Obale-Odan, Obele-Oniwahala, Games Village, Onigbongbo Village, Ojodu Pilot Estate, and Gowon Estate.
C	Ikeja Division excluding places listed in other zones but including Oregun, Ojota, Ketu, Oworonsoki, Ijeshatedo, Kirikiri, Bariga, Somolu, Oshodi, Isolo, Egbe, Ikotun, Akowonjo, Egbeda, Idimu, Iyana-Ipaja, Agege, Orile-Agege, Iju, Ifako, Ijaye, Moshalashi, Otubu, Pero, Asade, Mushin, Panade, Mangoro, Onipetesi, Dopemu, Cement, Sanngo, Oko-Oba, Matori, Challenge, Cappa, Olorunsogo, Idi-oro, Idi-Araba, Ilasamaja, Agidingbi, Papa Ashafa, Oke-Koto, Aguda-Tuntun, Ojodu Akiode, Isheri, Alakuko, Agbado, Ladilak, Abule-Okuta, Ifako-Gbagada, Ogudu Village, Alapere, Kollinton, Onigbongbo, Adekunle Village, Ogba, Ikate, Osapa, Magodo Village, Shangisha Village, Itire, Abaranje New Developments, Abule Nla, Abule Ijsha, Abule-Oja, Itire, Bolade, Ajisegiri, Ladipo, Sogunle, Alasia, Okota, Ishaga, Mafofuku, Ewu-tuntun, Coker Village
D	Ilaje Village, Ajegunle, Badiya, Ijora-Olaleye Village, Amukoko, Ilasan, Ikota, Ajah, Addo, Orile-Iganmu, Oke-Odo, Iba, Ijanikin, Ikare, Mile 2, Irede, Imore, Ibeshe, Ibaso, Ijgun-Egba, Onireke Village, Ojo-Alaba, Maza-maza, Ilaashe, Ojo, Okokomaiko, Ajangbadi, Mebamu, Ishasi, Ojo-Igbede, Otto-Ijanikin, Amuwo, Agboju, Oluti, Shasha, Aboru, Bolorunpelu, Baruwa, Abule Egba, Igando, Abaranje, Ijgun Village, Ipaja, Abule-Oki, Surulere Tuntun, Isheri-Olofin, Ayobo, Makoko, Old Alaba, Ejigbo, Iponri, Abesan Low Cost Housing Estate, Sangotedo, Ikota Resettlement Scheme, Owode, Thomas Laniyan Estate, Ajegunle via Owode-Onirin, Badore, Okun-Ajah, Abesan
E	Mende, Anthony Village, Idi-Iroko Village, Gbagada Phases I & II, Bamishile/Opebi Scheme,

*Source :* Rent Control and Recovery of Residential Property Edict, 1997

The zones were purposively adopted as guide for administration of questionnaires. In this regard, total of five hundred respondents resident in randomly selected tenement houses were interviewed. The respondents were divided equally into the five zones with one hundred tenement houses randomly selected from each of the zones, and one tenant from each of the houses. Also, out of three hundred and thirty-five registered firms of Estate Surveyors in Lagos metropolis, one hundred and twenty were randomly selected for administration of questionnaires that were specifically designed to elicit their opinions. In analyzing the data, the relative importance index analysis was used to determine the respondents' rating of the causes, types and resolutions of the conflicts and process of inferences used to make necessary deductions.

### Analysis

In determining the causes of conflicts common amongst the residents of low-income housing in the study area, the relative importance analysis was carried out the details of which are giving in Table-2.

**Table-2** : Rating of the Causes of Conflicts amongst Low-Income Housing Residents

S/N	Causes of conflicts	No. of Respondents and Rating (1 for best, 2 next, etc)								Relative Importance Index (RII)	Rank
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
1	Misrepresentation (carrying rumors, and unfounded stories)	50	10	30	25	15	12	10	22	0.66	4
2	Back-biting (group of people maliciously discussing others)	75	25	10	20	50	70	30	25	0.59	6
3	Clashes between children (disagreement between children leading to conflicts amongst their parents)	10	25	23	67	45	20	65	5	0.53	8
4	Threat to parties' interests and concerns (e.g. amorous relationships)	5	50	15	30	27	32	25	10	0.58	7
5	Envy (jealous of little success or better assets)	15	45	22	42	58	14	26	12	0.60	5
6	Uncooperative attitudes (in cleaning the common parts, etc)	75	20	10	50	20	15	11	7	0.72	3
7	Inadequate infra-structure : bathroom, kitchen, toilet, etc)	100	50	10	25	12	10	8	6	0.81	1
8	Non-settlement of bills (electricity, and community levies)	85	75	20	25	15	11	9	12	0.78	2

Table-2 shows the respondents' ranking of the various causes of conflicts amongst residents of low-income housing in Lagos metropolis. The relative importance indices range between 53% and 81% indicating that 81% of the respondents consider inadequate infrastructure such as bathroom, kitchen, and toilet facilities as the main cause of conflicts amongst the residents of low-income housing; followed by accumulated electricity and non-settlement of community levies (78%); cleaning of common parts (72%), while clashes between children has the least of 53%.

Table-3 contains the respondents' rating of the types of conflicts that occur amongst residents in the study area.

**Table-3** : Types of Conflicts amongst Residents of Low-income Houses in Lagos Metropolis

S/N	Type of conflicts	Respondents and Rating (1 for best, 2 next, etc)							Relative Importance Index (RII)	Rank
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
1	Two-male conflicts (involving only two adult male)	20	15	20	50	30	12	13	0.59	3
2	Two-female conflicts (involving only two adult female)	45	15	10	25	23	37	12	0.61	2
3	Two-only multi-sex conflicts (involving adult male and female only)	12	18	14	35	15	25	28	0.51	4
4	Two-male conflicts (involving only two young female)	25	15	16	14	26	35	50	0.47	6
5	Two-male conflicts (involving only two young male)	10	12	15	20	35	15	40	0.46	7
6	Multi-party non-Children conflicts (involving many people, excluding their children)	23	25	45	20	45	35	50	0.51	4
7	Multi-party cum Children conflicts (involving many husbands, wives and their children)	25	35	45	20	15	22	12	0.65	1

This Table shows that the most common type of conflicts amongst residents of low-income housing is the multi-party type of conflict that involves husbands, wives and their children. Usually, a mere quarrel amongst two children would lead to involvement of their mothers, and eventually the husbands and the entire area would become fouled up with abuses, accusation, and counter-accusation.



To determine the regularity of occurrences of such conflict, a cross-zonal analysis of the respondents was used. This involves respondents' opinions across all the zones in Table-1, the frequencies of occurrences of conflict in the study area are shown in Table-4

**Table-4** : Frequency of Occurrences of Conflicts According to Zones

S/N	Zone	regularly	occasionally	seldom	Total
1	A	70	30	0	100
2	B	65	35	0	100
3	C	85	15	0	100
4	D	18	82	0	100
5	E	27	73	0	100
Total		265	235	0	500

From Table 4, residents of Zone C mostly experience occurrences of conflict on regular basis while those that occasionally experience conflicts are predominant in Zone D, indicating that residents in the zone appeared to be most peaceful.

To ascertain respondents' knowledge of the consequences of conflicts and eight consequences identified in literature were listed to guide them, while relative importance index was used to determine the rank for each as shown in Table-5.

**Table-5** : Respondents' Opinion on Consequences of Conflicts

S/N	Consequence	Respondents and Rating (1 for best, 2 next)										Relative Importance Index (RII)	Rank
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9			
1	Facing criminal charges	34	24	16	18	20	22	25	36	24	0.55	9	
2	Damage to co-tenants' properties	12	20	15	22	30	15	11	18	10	0.58	8	
3	Loss of income and time	35	25	40	34	12	10	11	25	20	0.63	7	
4	Damage to landlord's properties	50	35	24	12	14	18	20	21	20	0.64	6	
5	Damage to conflicting parties' personal properties	50	25	12	36	15	12	18	20	12	0.66	4	
6	Bodily injuries to parties	50	35	45	12	18	12	35	14	16	0.66	4	
7	Poisoning and death	60	35	20	21	19	12	17	18	12	0.69	3	
8	Distrust	35	21	35	20	12	10	5	8	10	0.70	2	
9	Noisy and rowdy environment, and discomfort to neighbours	75	50	35	45	20	15	18	12	12	0.73	1	

This shows that 73% of the respondent ranked noisy and disorderly environment that cause discomfort to neighbours as the most common consequence of conflicts. This is followed by distrust (70%) while suspected poisoning and death arising from such conflicts was ranked third by 69% of the respondents.

Low-income housing residents in Lagos metropolis have sometimes taken steps in addressing conflicts that arise. Five of such options identified in earlier studies were stated to guide them; details of their responses are shown in Table-6.

**Table-6** : Tenants' Approaches to Resolution of Conflicts

S/N	Resolutions of conflicts	Respondents and Rating					Relative Importance Index (RII)	Rank
		1	2	3	4	5		
1	Landlord's/ Agent's Intervention	12	14	15	20	15	0.57	4
2	Co-tenants' intervention	80	60	50	35	20	0.72	1
3	Parties' own accord to reconcile	20	35	50	15	18	0.64	3
4	Ejection of conflicting tenants	50	30	25	20	15	0.71	2
5	Police intervention	10	15	20	25	11	0.57	4

The Table shows that many of such conflicts are resolved through intervention of co-tenants and parties that are not involved, with 72% of the respondents attesting to this; followed by

ejection of the parties that are in conflict (71%) while 57% of the respondents involve the Police in resolving the conflicts.

As part of management of properties the estate surveyors play important roles in resolving conflicts amongst the residents of low-income housing in the study area. There are eight approaches by which they resolve these conflicts as shown in Table 7.

*Table-7 : Estate Surveyors' Approaches to Resolution of Conflicts*

S/N	Resolutions of conflicts	Respondents and Rating (1 for best, 2 next, etc)								Relative Importance Index CRII)	Rank
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
1	Engaging in dialogue and negotiation	80	60	35	30	40	25	30	12	0.69	5
2	Creating personally affirming environment	5	15	35	40	45	30	23	30	0.51	8
3	Preventing conflicts through stringent recruitment process,	120	5	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.98	1
4	Preventing overcrowding,	100	10	15	0	0	0	1	2	0.94	3
5	Holding regular meetings	61	30	25	40	12	18	22	12	0.69	5
6	Providing adequate infrastructure	65	35	60	34	25	21	15	40	0.65	7
7	When there is impasse, parties are advised to quit	100	15	0	0	0	0	3	2	0.95	2
8	If conflicts continue, after the advice to quit, conflicting parties are ejected	120	5	1	2	0	0	12	11	0.87	4

The Table shows that estate surveyors always forestall conflicts amongst residents of low-income housing through stringent recruitment process which involved screening out potentially irritated and bad tenants and recruitment of like-minded tenants.

## Result and Discussion

An assessment of the conflicts resolution amongst residents of tenement properties in Lagos Metropolis was carried out by dividing the study area into five zones. The most common causes of conflicts amongst residents of the face-me-I-face-you type of low-income residential properties in Lagos metropolis is inadequate infrastructure, followed by non-settlement of electricity and neighbourhood levies, the costs of which the occupier share equally. All the five zones of the study area have reported cases of conflicts with two hundred and sixty-five (53%) respondents stating that conflicts frequently occur while two hundred and thirty-five (47%) were of the opinion that conflicts occur occasionally. The closeness of the percentages was subjected to further research, the finding of which shows that conflicts are more prevalent in Zone C where 85% of respondents revealed frequent occurrences followed by Zones A (70%), and B (65%). This is an indication that residents of Zone C may likely be impulsive and estate surveyor may require the best of his skill in recruiting tenants and managing low-income properties in the Zone.

Inadequate infrastructure contributes greatly as a source of conflicts. Many tenants scabble for kitchen, bathroom, central passage, balconies, electricity and water supply, and other facilities that are available for common use. Planning regulation may be adopted to give advantage to approval of buildings with adequate infrastructure over those with few and inadequate facilities.

It was found that co-tenants have important role to play in resolving conflicts amongst residents of low-income housing. This is an indication that involvement of co-tenants in conflict resolution will go a long way at peace-making and prevent conflicts with using the Police except when life is threatened or there is potential breach of public peace and tranquility.



Seven types of conflicts occur amongst the residents of low-income housing in Lagos metropolis. The prevalent type of conflicts involves multi-parties (two families - parents and their children). Conflicts probably arise from little disagreement between two members of the families extending to other members of the conflicting parties. Multi-party conflicts involving two or more families are complex situations, and require careful intervention by neighbours and estate surveyors. In this case, one should expect settlement to take a bit longer time than if the conflict involves only two, and greater precautionary measures must be in place to forestall individual conflict that may degenerate into crisis and breach of peace in the entire area.

### **Recommendations and Conclusion**

It is always better not to manage any property at all than to manage crisis-infected ones! Time is valuable to the estate surveyor and time spent in resolving conflicts could better be diverted to rewarding ventures. Involving reliable residents in conflict resolution will prevent estate surveyor from expending time and energy on what is not worthy and enable them spend quality time on more rewarding aspects of the professional practice. The estate surveyor also has important role to play by ensuring that facilities provided by their clients are adequate before taking up the letting and management of a property while planning approving authorities must ensure that facilities provided in low-income tenement houses are adequate in relation to the number of tenants before approval is granted.

Creative problem-solving strategies are essential positive approaches to conflict management, and such management should start from tenants' recruitment stage. It will be painful for estate surveyors to manage conflict that could possibly have been prevented at the initial stage. Tenants of like-minds, of same social and ethno-religious status must at the recruitment stage be recruited. Provision of adequate infrastructure to residents to give them unhindered access will create room for minimal frictions and go a long way at preventing conflicts amongst the residents.

When conflicts arise, the ways out is for the estate surveyor to be patient and ensure that parties' points of view are heard, and issues in conflict are clarified so that they will not be biased in taking final decision, and when there is impasse in resolving the conflicts,

creating neutral grounds and retreat from untenable position will provide the first step in negotiating an agreement between the conflicting parties while staying open for another day to reach settlement if impasse could not be resolved at first.

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